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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KINGSTON 001361

SIPDIS

WHA/CAR (BENT)  
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [PINR](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: WHA/CAR DIRECTOR MEETS WITH LEADING PM CANDIDATE,  
MFA UNDERSECRETARY, SENIOR BRITISH AND CANADIAN DIPLOMATS

REF: A. KINGSTON 1342

[1](#)B. KINGSTON 1346

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Mark J. Powell. Reason 1.5(b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) On May 11, visiting WHA/CAR Director Brian Nichols met with Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs and non-resident Ambassador to Haiti Peter Black to discuss OASGA issues, the situation in Haiti, and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), about which Black registered concern. Nichols next met jointly with British High Commissioner and Canadian Acting High Commissioner to exchange views on Jamaica's crime situation and to discuss encouraging greater GOJ/CARICOM engagement with Haiti. Nichols then proceeded to Gordon House for a meeting with Minister of Local Government, Community and Sport Portia Simpson Miller, Jamaica's most popular politician and a leading candidate to replace PJ Patterson as Prime Minister. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Visiting WHA/CAR Director Brian Nichols met on May 11 with Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs and non-resident Ambassador to Haiti Peter Black, followed by a joint meeting with British High Commissioner Peter Mathers and Canadian Acting High Commissioner Bryan Burton. Nichols then met with Minister of Local Government, Community and Sport Portia Simpson Miller at Gordon House. Nichols also met with Jamaica Labor Party Deputy Leader James Robertson (Ref A), Tourism Director Paul Pennicook (Ref B), and visited the USAID-funded inner-city community project (septel).

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MFAFT: OASGA, Haiti, WHTI  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) On May 11, visiting WHA/CAR Director Brian Nichols, accompanied by Pol/Econ Chief, met with Ambassador Peter Black, Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) and Jamaica's non-resident envoy to Haiti. Black was joined by MFAFT Caribbean and Americas Department officer Franz Hall. The major issues covered were: the upcoming OASGA in Ft. Lauderdale; Haiti; and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI).

[1](#)4. (C) Amb. Black opened by asking what themes the USG would promote at the OASGA. Nichols said that USG priorities include: ensuring that regional commitment to democracy continues; support for efforts to reinforce democracy; and poverty eradication efforts. Black advised that CARICOM Foreign Ministers would meet in Freeport immediately prior to the OASGA to discuss agenda items, as well as Summit of the Americas issues, and to coordinate their approach. Their aim, he said, would be "the highest degree of coordination."

[1](#)5. (C) On Haiti, Nichols said that preparations for elections are vital, including the establishment of a secure environment in which elections can be held, and noted the UN/OAS elections funding shortfall of approximately USD 22M. He said that the USG would provide another USD 8 million to the UN/OAS effort. The EU has indicated it plans to provide another 8 million euros (approximately USD 11M), and Canada has indicated it will consider additional contributions if other countries would also do so. In this regard, he continued, a joint UN/OAS appeal for electoral funding at the June OASGA would be helpful.

[1](#)6. (C) Black said that CARICOM shares many USG concerns regarding Haiti, and that CARICOM would release a statement as early as that afternoon regarding the situation of former PM Neptune. The IGOH, he said, "is not doing themselves any favors" with their treatment of Neptune. Black said that the rule of law is "an essential principle" for CARICOM, and that the latter could not mend its relations with the IGOH until Neptune's situation is resolved to its satisfaction. He complained that the IGOH seems to blunder whenever improved relations with CARICOM seem at hand, with positive steps by the IGOH invariably followed by "measures guaranteed to

harden CARICOM's position" against fully re-engaging. Nichols said that recent public comments by Jean-Bertrand Aristide, including his reference to a "black Holocaust", were inflammatory, unhelpful and unwarranted. Some Lavalas politicians were interested in participating in the elections, Nichols said, but await a signal from Aristide that they may do so without reprisal from pro-Aristide elements. He opined that Lavalas was still a "very strong" political entity, but one which enjoys far less support now than previously.

17. (S) When Nichols asked point-blank whether notorious Aristide henchman Jean-Claude Jean-Baptiste remained in Jamaica, Black replied that he was unfamiliar with the name. (Comment: Black seemed genuinely surprised by the question and unaware of Jean-Baptiste's identity and presence in Jamaica. Post strongly believes that Jean-Baptiste's entry was facilitated by higher ranking officials at the Ministry, most likely by Ministry number two Delano Franklyn and/or Foreign Minister K.D. Knight. End Comment.)

18. (SBU) Raising WHTI, Black said the initiative "will pose a major problem" for Jamaica. Sixty percent of arriving tourists in Montego Bay present identification documents other than passports he said, asking if there was any flexibility with regard to implementing WHTI. Nichols replied that WHTI is a statutory requirement that must be fully in place by 2008. He explained that the implementation schedule is phased to be able to accommodate passport issuance flow, and that the USG will undertake a massive public awareness campaign to alert Amcit travelers to the requirement. He cautioned Black that delaying implementation of WHTI for the Caribbean could back up against the WHTI implementation schedule for travelers to Mexico and Canada, causing further delays.

19. (SBU) Nichols acknowledged the GOJ's concerns that WHTI could negatively impact its tourism industry, while noting that WHTI would also help the GOJ better control its own borders. Black contended that WHTI would severely impact "spontaneous travel" to Jamaica by Amcits. He also questioned the necessity of machine readable passport checks of travelers departing Jamaica, saying "the feeling is that we don't need it." Black was visibly relieved when Nichols informed him that he would next be meeting with GOJ Director of Tourism Paul Pennicook, to discuss WHTI (Ref B).

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Senior UK, Canadian Diplomats on Haiti; Jamaican Crime  
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10. (C) In a May 11 tour d'horizon meeting with outgoing British High Commissioner Peter Mathers and Canadian Acting High Commissioner Bryan Burton, Nichols, accompanied by Charge and Pol/Econ Chief, discussed GOJ views on Haiti, as well as efforts to combat Jamaica's crime problem. Mathers began by noting HMG's firm support for idea of greater Caribbean integration given the region's widely dispersed, numerically limited population and relatively scarce resources. Noting that HMG views Jamaica as having relatively more potential than most of its fellow CARICOM states, Mathers said that he was trying to arrange a June meeting in London with Prime Minister Blair for Prime Minister Patterson, while the latter is en route to a G-77 gathering in Doha. Nichols encouraged Mathers to suggest that PM Blair urge Patterson and CARICOM to do more for Haiti. Mathers (who retires this year) replied that he had never seen Patterson so angry as when the USG - in Patterson's view - "scuppered" CARICOM's Haiti initiative shortly before Aristide's resignation and departure in February 2004.

11. (C) Mathers observed that Patterson enjoys great respect within CARICOM as an elder statesman, and that the PM had been forthright with Aristide in the pre-resignation negotiations in Kingston and elsewhere. Noting that a senior HMG visitor to Kingston shortly after Aristide's resignation had assured Patterson there had been no "conspiracy" to remove the Haitian from office, Mathers said that nevertheless, "PJ clearly felt betrayed". Accordingly, Mathers predicted, getting Patterson to engage with Haiti again would be "a difficult trick to take." Canadian Acting High Commissioner Burton interjected that Prime Minister Martin spoke to Patterson "a number of times" in the immediate aftermath of Aristide's departure from Haiti to correct the misperception that there had been a foreign conspiracy against Aristide, and that the GOC had acted as a USG "puppet" in ousting him. Patterson, he said, had soon become non-receptive to Martin's calls.

12. (C) Acknowledging that the Latortue government had its shortcomings, Nichols stressed that "the best way to get rid of the IGOH is through credible elections." He urged London and Ottawa to encourage CARICOM states to put their electoral knowledge to use in Haiti. Charge reinforced the point, noting that CARICOM assistance would be symbolic but

important.

13. (C) On the issue of violent crime in Jamaica, Mathers urged caution in "ascribing too much significance" to recent murders (refs C,D). He contended that the murder rate was considerably worse in the 1970s, and that many residents of garrison communities want an end to the murders but do not trust the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) in their communities. For this reason, he said, attempts by the JCF to force its way into the worst areas "would be a Normandy invasion." According to Mathers, Deputy JCF Commissioner Mark Shields (who is on secondment from the London Metropolitan Police and is the second most senior officer in the JCF) does not see the situation as hopeless. Asked by Nichols whether the will exists to do the necessary steps to control crime, Mathers replied that Jamaicans are increasingly fed up, but will need time to organize among themselves to implement the necessary changes. An ironic result of success against organized crime in Jamaica thus far, Mathers said, is that "disorganized" crime often results as smaller criminals fight over turf previously controlled by crime lords who kept some semblance of order.

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Leading Prime Ministerial Candidate Portia Simpson Miller  
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14. (C) Nichols, accompanied by Pol/Econ Chief, called on Local Government, Community and Sport Minister Portia Simpson Miller. Simpson Miller, widely regarded as the most popular politician of either party in Jamaica, spoke with confidence about her prospects for succeeding PJ Patterson as Jamaica's next Prime Minister. She described her long service in government, including two previous ministerial portfolios, and her active political life as having provided her with extensive experience and leadership qualities. According to Simpson Miller, her own humble origins as one of eight children in a poor family, enable her to relate to the vast majority of Jamaica's poor citizens. Unspoken in her claim, but understood nonetheless, was the point that her primary rivals to succeed Patterson hail from more privileged backgrounds.

15. (C) Simpson Miller, whose parliamentary constituency includes one of Jamaica's strongest "garrison communities," emphatically condemned the recent murders of policemen, and Jamaica's high crime rate generally. She asserted that she refuses to interact with criminal elements in her constituency, as doing so would lend them legitimacy. (Comment: If Simpson Miller's contention that she does not associate in any way with known criminals were true, it would make her a rarity among the country's political elite. End Comment.) She also observed that merely arresting the impoverished inner-city youth whom many blame for Jamaica's crime problem would not resolve matters. Many of those behind the downtown gunmen and extortionists, she said, reside "uptown" and away from the violence in which they play a facilitating role. She did not offer specifics.

16. (C) Asked to assess her performance at a recent University of the West Indies (UWI) political forum for all declared prime ministerial candidates, Simpson Miller said she was pleased by the support shown by the crowd. Pol/Econ Chief, who attended Simpson Miller's address and those of several other candidates, observed that hers had been the best attended and that her audience had been vocally enthusiastic. Beaming, Simpson Miller said that she was especially pleased because her staff permitted "only three or four" people from her constituency to attend, which meant that the support she received that night - because it came from a more neutral audience of "outsiders" - bodes well for her prospects. Asked why she would discourage her own constituents from coming out to support her at such an event, Simpson Miller's reply inadvertently illustrated one aspect of Jamaica's entrenched "garrison" phenomenon: "My constituents would not have reacted well to anyone who tried to heckle or taunt me."

17. (U) This message has been cleared by WHA/CAR Director Nichols.  
ROBINSON